Calcutta Metro

2568. SHRI TAPIT BARAN TOPDAR : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Union Government propose to provide extra budgetary support for expansion of Calcutta Metro;

(b) if so, whether the Ministry of Railways have approached the Planning Commission in this regard; and

(c) the decision taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) (a) to (c) : It has been decided to approach the Cabinet to provide dividend-free funds under Plan Head 'MTP' in the Railway Plan for Metro's extension, as also for making good the looses on the operation and maintenance of the existing Metro.

New TV Centres

2569. SHRI P.R. DASMUNSI : Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) the number of new Doordarshan Kendras, Relay Transmission Centres and new channels to be completed during the Ninth Five Year Plan period;

(b) whether there is any venue in favour of Darjeeling Hill, Baueghat, Purulia and Birbhum district of West Bengal, so far relay centres concerned;

(c) If so, the details thereof;

(d) whether any sports channel will be introduced during the Ninth Plan; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY) : (a) While 9th Plan proposals of Doordarshan are yet to be approved, 25 Programme Production Centres (PPCs), 16 HIgh Power TV transmitters (HPTs), 121 Low Power TV transmitters (LPTs), 106 Very Low Power TV transmitters (VLPTs) and 4 transposers, which are presently under implementation, are expected to be completed during the 9th Plan as continuing schemes, in phases, subject to availability of resources, infrastructural facilities and *inter-se* priorities. At present, no new channel is proposed to be started.

(b) and (c) While an LPT at Balrampur in Purulia district and TV Studio project (permanent) at Shantiniketan in Birbhum district are presently under implementation, HPT each at Balurghat and Shantiniketan and a VLPT at Baghmandi are envisaged to be set up in these districts subject to availability of resources and other infrastructural facilities.

(d) There is no such proposal at present.

(e) Does not arise.

SAIL Profits

2570. SHRI B.L. SHANKAR : Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state :

(a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to the news-item captioned "SAIL profits hit by free pricing regime" appearing in the *Times of India*, June 29, 1997;

(b) if so, the details and the reasons therefor;

(c) the steps/measures adopted and proposed to be adopted to increase the profits of SAIL during 1997-98;

(d) the total production of SAIL during 1996-97 and likely to be produced in 1997-98; and

(e) the total export of the above steel production by SAIL and consumed indigenously during 1996-97 and to be exported and consumed during 1997-98?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA): (a) and (b) The profit (before tax) in SAIL in 1996-97 was Rs. 602 crores as compared to Rs. 1318.61 crores in 1995-96. During the year 1996-97 SAIL had to face abnormal increase in input costs on account of cost escalation in coal price, petroleum price, railway freight, power tariff, special custom duties etc. The impact of these escalations is about Rs. 1000 crores while only a part of this impact could be neutralised through improvement in operational efficiencies. Other reasons, which have affected the profitability, include decline in the international prices of steel and freer imports bringing the margins under stress as also the sluggish market behaviour etc. due to which SAIL could not pass on the impact of input cost escalation to the customers.

(c) SAIL is taking steps on a continuous basis to improve its performance, which include modernisation and technological upgradation of its plants, improving techno-economic factors i.e. reduction in coke rate, energy consumption, metallic input, improvement in yield, extensive customer contact, market oriented product-mix, improvement in quality, long term relationship with customers, leadership in service and customer satisfaction, strict control and monitoring of operating costs, higher productivity and greater autonomy to field officers, etc.

(d) The total production of Saleable Steel in SAIL (excluding subsidiaries) during 1996-97 was 9.235 million tonnes and the MOU target for 1997-98 is 9.6 million tonnes.

(e) During 1996-97 total exports of Saleable Steel from SAIL accounted for 4.79 lakh tonnes and domestic